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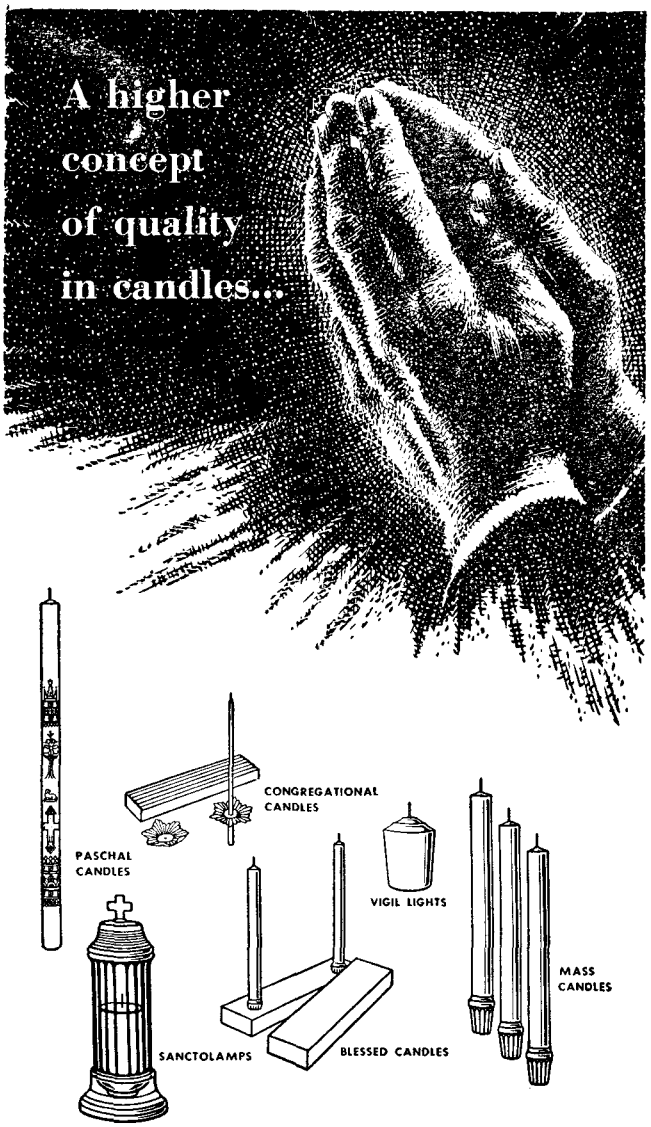

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL VICTORY

THE PEOPLE of the United States have returned an overwhelming mandate for Dwight D. Eisenhower and for the Democratic Party. The President was elected with the greatest popular vote in history. But his sweeping victory was his alone. Only by grasping the extent of the Eisenhower victory can one realize the relative victory of the Democratic Party. For the winning candidate failed, for the first time in over a century, to carry with him either the Senate or the House. The results of the election are, thus, more surprising than anything that occurred during a campaign which saw few crucial issues develop between the Presidential candidates and which left most voters singularly apathetic and unexcited.

As usual, post-election analyses can explain what could not be foreseen. President Eisenhower's victory was, of course, predicted by most people. Even the strongly partisan followers of Adlai Stevenson were motivated less by the belief that he would win than by the conviction that he should win. It was not expected, however, that the President's personal popularity and prestige would so completely outweigh other factors in the election.

It is now apparent that the electorate attributed to the President the various advantages which have accrued to the nation during his four years in office. The issues of peace and prosperity, so stressed during the campaign, seem to have counted heavily. The fact that the Supreme Court ruling on desegregation came under his Administration influenced many Negro voters. And many people judged, quite rightly, that the temper of political debate is today less harsh and bitter because of Mr. Eisenhower's conciliatory nature. These factors, coupled with the President's evident honesty and sincerity, formed the tangibles of the Eisenhower "magic" which allowed him to project to the voters a consistent, felt image as Mr. Stevenson never did. As for the Democratic Party, its victory shows that it is still the strong majority party; voters who backed Eisenhower were unwilling to desert the party. But more important than these causes are what the results portend for the future of the parties and the country.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that when the President acknowledged his victory the night of the election his thoughts turned to the Republican Party which he has tried so hard to shape and reform. "Such a vote as that," he said, "cannot be merely for an individual. It is for principles and ideals for which that individual and his associates have stood and have tried to exemplify." And he cautioned his listeners to "remember that a political party deserves the approbation of America only as it represents the ideals, the aspirations and the hopes of Americans."

When the President took this occasion to reiterate his sincere beliefs concerning the Republican Party he could not know that the victory was only his and not his party's, that the voters had elected only him and not a government of "modern Republicanism." But President Eisenhower's statement highlights a problem which he knows well and will continue to know. As a tremendously popular leader who wishes to reform his own party he must depend upon a Democratic Congress to support his policies. Further, since he cannot be reelected, his own voice will sound weaker to those Republicans who wish to return the party to the Old Guard. It is clear that there will be some tension between the strong leader, who must continue to reshape his party, and the party which must search for a new leader. The Democrats, as a strong party, have the simpler task of finding an equally strong leader.

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In the address in which he conceded defeat, Adlai Stevenson spoke of partisan hopes. "But even more urgent," he said, "is the hope that our leaders will recognize that America wants to face up squarely to the facts of today's world. . . . We are ready for the test that we know history has set for us."

We have, admittedly, pressing domestic problems. But the greatest test we face as a nation must be met in foreign affairs. With a world in ferment and revolution we must be a strong nation among nations. We must be successful where we have so often failed—in our foreign policies. If there was a time when we could drift safely, that time is past. Only vigorous and intelligent action will now allow us to assert the leadership we cannot disown.

With a full realization of the terrible problems that will face the new Administration, problems partisan and non-partisan, domestic and foreign, the editors of The Commonweal join with other Americans in wishing the President the greatest success in his task of guiding our nation during the next four years.

OF PEACE AND FREEDOM

THAT PORTION of mankind which is still allowed to feel and express humane emotions found its own reactions to events in Hungary and Egypt movingly expressed by Pope Pius in his recently broadcast plea for the restoration of peace. He expressed, not only his own, but the world's anguish "at the iniquities perpetrated against the people of Hungary, guilty only of having sought respect for fundamental human rights," and spoke of "the moral obligation of trying every licit means in order that their dignity be restored to its pristine state and their freedom given back to them."

Pope Pius also expressed again his "anxiety for peace," and, in an obvious reference to Britain and France, spoke of his sorrow "at seeing a thinning in the ranks of those on whose authority, union and good will" had been placed so much hope for peace. He called for an end to "brutal repression, plans for war, of political preponderance among powers" and pleaded that all the members of the human family "be united for freedom and for peace."

Many, perhaps most, of those who read or hear his words will feel that the Pope is voicing hollow counsels and impractical programs. Blood runs in the streets, the men and machines of war are massing, nations are nervously eyeing their economies, their prestige, their power, and sharpen the sword to defend them. In such a world, fearful of and preparing for the war that nobody wants, the Pontiff's voice seems unreal and comes from far away. That fact is the measure of our alienation and need for redemption, for the distant voice is, as Pope Pius reminds us, "the voice of conscience, of civilization, of brotherhood . . . the very voice of God."

NEXT WEEK

GEORGE LORIMER writes about Melfi, a rural community in southern Italy.

"Michele Mosucca, when he is not unemployed, is a *bracciante* (farm hand). . . . The cost of living in Melfi is low, not because prices are low (they are surprisingly high considering the income of the population), but because one manages to do without even the essentials of life. Mosucca, for example, like many others, eats only one full meal a day. His basic diet is bread, *pasta,* beans, a bit of oil, and in the summertime vegetables and fruit. He never tastes either meat or sugar."

THE UN POLICE FORCE

IT IS the French who have long been the most ardent champions of the idea of an international police force as a defense against aggression. To those who favor the establishment of a strong international body with a common system of law, there is something very logical about the inclusion with it of police with powers of enforcement. As Germany's population and technical proficiency have increased, the French have been impelled to recognize that they were falling further and further behind their traditional enemy. Allies were uncertain; protection could be assured only through a well-buttressed international organization of which France would be a constituent part.

Although the League of Nations successfully intervened in a few minor disputes, it had no army with which to back up its decisions. Under the original Charter of the United Nations, the Security Council was to have an armed force at its disposal, but failure to agree as to what sort of a force that would be has prevented its formation. As Russia was boycotting the Security Council in 1950 when South Korea was invaded, the UN succeeded then in organizing a sixteen-nation army with a unified

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command assigned to the United States. And to prepare for future emergencies, Dean Acheson that same year proposed and put through the Uniting for Peace resolution whereby, in the event of a veto in the Security Council, cases of alleged aggression could immediately be submitted to the UN Assembly for appropriate international action.

Such are the precedents for the UN force gathering at Naples to be flown into Egypt to enforce the UN cease-fire. This time by design it is being made up of contingents from the world's smaller nations, none of them behind the Iron Curtain. At first it will not amount to more than 2,500 men and may build up to a maximum of 6,000. It is a policing rather than a fighting force. There is even some question at present writing whether it will reach the battle area soon enough to displace the French, British and Israeli troops and remove the pretext for the threatening force of Russian "volunteers." The exact area it will patrol and the way the attacking forces are to be replaced have not yet been agreed upon. Militarily, then, these contingents with blue UN arm bands are anything but formidable.

In a two- or three-Power world, equipped with nuclear weapons, such an army has to rely primarily on the force of world public opinion. The only way of imposing its will is, ironically, to threaten to withdraw, leaving Egypt at least in full control of the Canal. The combatants are willing to give way to it as an agent of the United Nations (whatever Soviet threats may have to do with the alacrity with which Britain, France and Israel accepted this formula). Moreover, these few men are being introduced into about as explosive a situation as can be imagined. The bitterest national hatreds and the most sweeping totalitarian ambitions are involved.

That is why the eyes of the world will follow the fortunes of this hardy little band about to be set down on the Egyptian sands to maintain order and peace in the face of terrific odds. If they succeed, there will be much less pretext in the future for attempted *coups* on places like Suez or for organizing "volunteers." That is one reason that the fervent good wishes of lovers of peace all over the world go out to the UN force assembling at Naples, Egypt-bound.

MR. STEVENSON'S FUTURE

THE EISENHOWER victory was a smashing personal endorsement. In electoral votes it was a landslide, and in popular votes the President ran almost ten million ahead of Adlai Stevenson. Even at that, though, twenty-five million Americans voted for the Democratic candidate, and now, almost inevitably, a good many of them are reluctant to see him completely out of national political life. This same sentiment seems to exist even among some who voted for President Eisenhower but who still feel that in Adlai Stevenson the nation has a man of unusual intelligence and integrity. In post-election conversations, therefore, and in letters to newspapers, many of these people are now asking if there is not some way Mr. Stevenson's talents can be utilized in a public post. Some are even suggesting that Mr. Eisenhower bring the defeated Democratic candidate into his Cabinet, and one day recently a rumor ran through New York that the President was on the point of naming Adlai Stevenson to replace the ailing John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State.

We find this notion of Adlai Stevenson in the Eisenhower Cabinet a fantastic one. How could he replace John Foster Dulles, except in the unlikely event that the Eisenhower Administration were prepared to say that its handling of foreign policy had been tragically inept and that it wanted to change directions? During the campaign Mr. Stevenson spelled out his indictment of the Administration's foreign policy in general, and in particular of the course it has followed during the last four years in the Middle East. And although he agrees with Mr. Eisenhower's decision to meet the immediate crisis by turning to the UN and by casting this nation in the role of peacemaker, he is convinced that the Administration is now dealing with a situation brought on in large measure by its own mistakes. He believes that in the Middle East the Administration did what it should not have done and left undone what it should have done, citing, for example, its failure to push the suggestion he made a year ago that a UN police force be sent to the Middle East in order to prevent precisely the kind of crisis that has now developed.

During his campaign, Mr. Stevenson failed to persuade enough voters that his indictment of U. S. foreign policy was correct, and he lost the election. But it seems clearly impossible to imagine that he could or would now join the Administration to carry out a foreign policy with which he so sharply disagrees. Nor are we convinced that it would be a good idea, even if both he and Mr. Eisenhower agreed that he should make such an effort.

Much has been said and written about a bipartisan foreign policy, but its limits should be clear. It can operate only when a genuine national con-

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sensus exists. That consensus does not now exist. In practice, incorporating members of the opposition into the Administration in power seems possible only when the nation is at war, and even then there is still need for vigorous national debate. During the last war, for example, would not the United States and the world have profited from a fuller public discussion on the question of war aims —on, say, President Roosevelt's insistence on unconditional surrender? Even the necessity of winning a war should not mean abdication of the right to think and, when proper, to disagree with the policies of the Administration in office, and this is even more true now when the nation is not formally at war.

We agree with those who feel that Adlai Stevenson has much to contribute to the nation. It is one of the peculiarities of the American system that the defeated Presidential candidate often has no public podium from which to address the nation; he is the leader of the loyal opposition, but often, as in the case of Adlai Stevenson, he must use a private soapbox rather than a public forum to speak. But this problem would hardly be solved by bringing the defeated candidate into the victor's Cabinet; this would only turn the loyal opposition into the captive opposition. If Adlai Stevenson is to be appointed to a public office, the only suitable place that we can see for him is one that is and should be truly bipartisan, such as, possibly, representing the United States at the UN.

SUEZ AND AFTER

ABANDONING their usual policy of limited goals singly and patiently arrived at, the British and French evidently hoped, with one sweep of the mailed fist, to reestablish their positions of power in the Middle East, to insure the flow through the Suez of the oil they need for economic survival, to shatter Egypt as a bulwark of Soviet influence, and, perhaps above all, to unhorse Gamal Nasser in the full view of the Arab world.

The wheels of power politics are greased with pragmatism for the most part, and had the French and British master stroke succeeded, the world would have been presented with a *fait accompli* which it would probably have tried to live with rather than attempt to restore the previous situation.

But the master stroke did not succeed in even one of its many objectives. President Nasser still rules Egypt, and there is reason to believe that, as the prime target of the "colonial powers," he is now a hero, not only to the Arabs, but to the uncommitted countries as well. The wreckage-strewn Canal will be closed to traffic for at least three months, and most of the Arab states have already shut off their oil supplies to Britain and France. In attempting to cut Nasser down to size, Mr. Eden and M. Mollet have passed the knife perilously close to their own throats.

Even more importantly, they have enabled the Soviet to widen its influence in the Middle East. By threatening armed intervention "to protect the integrity of Egypt," the USSR was able to pose to the Arabs as a dedicated foe of anti-colonialism at the very time it was drowning in blood the revolt of the Hungarian people. Meanwhile, the Soviet bloc continues to enlist "volunteers" to "safeguard peace in the Middle East," and the free world can only think with a shudder of similar volunteers who "safeguarded the peace" in Korea and Indochina.

But the military gamble of the French and English has hurt their friends as well as helped their foes. By acting in the grand 19th century manner, they have put the UN to a severe test, have fostered the resurgence of isolationism in the U. S., and have dealt body blows to NATO, the Baghdad Pact, SEATO and the Commonwealth of Nations. The West, indeed, lost much and Britain and France gained nothing when their assault boats crunched ashore at Port Said.

If the onrush of history allows time, however, the Atlantic Alliance may be rebuilt on a stronger basis than it was before the debacle in Egypt. This rebuilding must include a clearer understanding by the United States of the valid and vital interests of Britain and France in the Middle East, and a clear recognition on their part that our national interests in that area are not always identical with their own. On the most important issue there is, fortunately, identity of interest offering grounds for a strong and common policy: every feasible measure of resistance to the growing Soviet threat to the waterways, the pipelines and, above all, to the peoples of the Middle East.

Funds for the purchase and transporting of food and medical supplies to the Hungarian people constitute an important objective of this year's Catholic Bishops' Thanksgiving Collection for war victims. Contributions of money and of usable clothing, shoes, bedding and blankets for the needy in forty-one countries can be made through local parish churches from November 18-25 throughout the United States.

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The Challenge of Truth

"THE UNITED STATES HAS A VITAL INTEREST IN MAINTAINING THE CLOSEST POSSIBLE CONTACT WITH THE MILLIONS BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN"

ROBERT BASS

THE DRAMATIC rush of events in Eastern Europe has once again focused attention on the United States' policy toward the Soviet orbit and, more specifically, on the future of America's information and propaganda activities.

The train of events which began to unfold after Stalin's death in the spring of 1953 has gained tremendous momentum since the Twentieth Party Congress in the Soviet Union last February. In the course of a brief six-month period there have been well-organized student demonstrations in Czechoslovakia. In an almost spectacular sequence of events, Poland's leading "Titoist," Wladislaw Gomulka, has regained his position in the Polish Communist Party, defied a Soviet ultimatum, and appears to be in the process of purging the country of all Stalinist influence. In Hungary the people rebelled not only against Stalinism but against Communism, and are now being brutally crushed by Soviet tanks, planes, and troops.

In these events, what part, if any, has been played by the American effort to communicate with and to influence the peoples of Eastern Europe? Has the time come to discontinue these efforts, or to extend them? Are the old formulae, devised in the frost of cold war, still valid, and if they are not, what should the new ones be?

The timeliness and urgency of these questions is beyond doubt. Americans should remember that, despite recent developments in Poland, the lesson of Hungary shows that the Soviet Union may still find ways and means to restore full authority over the hundred million people in Eastern Europe, their massive material resources, and their strategically valuable homelands. Americans must also remember that where there is a move toward greater and still greater independence of Moscow, the United States has a clear and vital interest in maintaining the closest possible contact with the millions who are groping their way out of a world of suffering toward a greater measure of freedom.

It is unfortunate but true that both official thinking and public opinion have tended to run to extremes on this essential aspect of America's foreign relations. In 1952, for instance, only the burning issue of Korea claimed more public attention than did the loud and often bitter debate between the advocates of "liberation" and the defenders of "containment." Yet today the voter will find no clear or comprehensive statement of America's attitude toward what may well become a major revolution or, if the Soviets triumph completely, one of the most terrifying victories of totalitarianism in the twentieth century. Nor does much serious thought appear to be given to the fact that in the official Voice of America and in the privately-sponsored radio and airborne-leaflet operations of the Free Europe Committee, the United States possesses potent instruments, capable of reaching an audience of many millions and of impressing them for good or for ill. The first Eisenhower Administration soon learned, what is now quite obvious, that the idea of "liberation" was less than realistic. On the other hand, it is quite as obvious that America's official and private information media are a much greater asset today than they have ever been, and that they have a potential strength that is not being fully developed.

THE TRUTH of this assertion can be easily demonstrated by simply comparing the present condition of Communist Europe with that which prevailed five or six years ago. After 1948 Communism, in the ugly and brutal guise of Stalinism, had apparently triumphed. The shadow of Soviet military might had settled with seeming finality over Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania. Local emissaries of the Kremlin had successfully beaten down every vestige of democratic opposition. Churches of every denomination had been suppressed, and many of their leaders imprisoned. The Communists' own ranks were ruthlessly purged of all dissident elements. Laszlo Rajk and Traicho Kostov had been executed in Hungary and Bulgaria respectively for alleged treachery and "Titoism." Gomulka, the deposed Party Secretary, was in a Polish jail. The Slansky trial was in preparation in Czechoslovakia. Throughout

Mr. Bass, who formerly taught history at Smith and Mount Holyoke Colleges, specializes in Eastern European affairs.

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Eastern Europe every obstacle to a program of undisguised Sovietization seemed to have been removed. An unparalleled atmosphere of fear testified to the power and implacability of the Communist regimes. The human and material resources of countries which had suffered the devastations of war were subjected to unprecedented strains through the use of open terror and unrelenting propaganda. The build-up of heavy industry was pressed with a vigor equaled only by that applied to the collectivization of agriculture. Human suffering for the sake of Soviet aggrandizement had reached a new high.

What is the picture today? In Hungary the people have shown an unexpected and desperate heroism in their opposition to Communism. In Poznan rioting workers stormed the headquarters of the secret police. They demanded bread and freedom. And, in Warsaw, the government rejected an ultimatum personally delivered by the First Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, and Gomulka heads a nationalist party. In Czechoslovakia, there are brief but widespread industrial strikes, and students stage public demonstrations in favor of a free press and the restoration of opposition parties.

It goes without saying that these events are the result of a multitude of causes: the death of Stalin and the purge of Beria; the introduction of a "New Course" in the USSR by Malenkov and its continuation in modified form by a "collective leadership"; Khrushchev's public capitulation to Marshal Tito; the Geneva meeting of the Heads of State and the subsequent emphasis on relaxation not only of international but also of internal tensions within the Soviet orbit; and finally, the ideological and doctrinal implications of the Soviet Twentieth Party Congress. All these have played their parts in precipitating a rapid avalanche of events.

YET ONE other element must be included in the picture. The fact that it is, perhaps, less tangible and dramatic than the others cannot obscure the significance of the rebirth of public opinion in Eastern Europe—and of its almost inevitable concomitant, the determination of people in all walks of life to take courage and to act in their own behalf and self-interest.

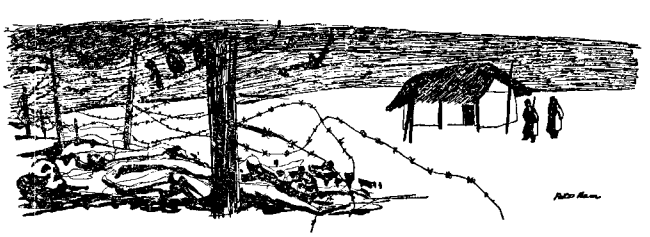
The major political events of the past three years have exerted a powerful influence on Communist leaders everywhere. Yet it must be obvious that the man in the street was not as directly affected by Beria's arrest as was the local Minister of National Security. Ordinary people, it would seem, were motivated by their perception of Communist insecurity and confusion; by the sense that the concern of the free world added an element of hope to their lives; by the knowledge that the Iron Curtain, which had descended with such apparent finality a few years earlier, was not impenetrable; by the fact that Communist propaganda had lost its monopoly, and that from America and other Western countries one could obtain full and free information on world events and conditions.

The successful Western effort to surmount or penetrate the Iron Curtain has played its part. If the West did not "bring about" massive popular movements nor "cause" specific events, the values, ideas, and information which it has had to offer did, apparently, play a significant role in furnishing the *rationale* which underlies the widespread and seemingly irrepressible ferment in Eastern Europe today.

Western mass media have obviously not "instigated" actions. This has never been their proper or legitimate function. They have, however, succeeded in spreading knowledge and in deepening the impact of events. Their work has consisted in providing an honest account of life beyond the Iron Curtain; of reporting the policies and aims of the United States and the other democracies; of making the paramount facts of Soviet and Communist weakness matters of public knowledge to an enormous audience. Such widespread awareness, and a corresponding capacity to act, were inconceivable in Eastern Europe five years ago.

IT IS QUITE obvious that the old formulae, worked out during the Stalin era, are no longer sound. Strident tones and stark over-simplifications have clearly outlived their usefulness. Yet this does not alter the fact that difficult and expensive efforts have been made for many years to break down the artificial barrier of the Iron Curtain. This undertaking has only now reached the verge of genuine success. It would seem to be up to those who saw the wisdom of making the initial effort to see the opportunities which that effort has created. We now face the great question of what we should do in the future.

The drama of events in Poland and in Hungary has provided the West, the United States in particular, with new opportunities to speak, and also with new responsibilities to rise above platitudinous expressions of sympathy or sanctimonious admonitions. New approaches are needed, conspicuous for their flexibility, their sound analysis of present events, and their sensitivity to the complex and changing climate of public and official opinion throughout Eastern Europe. With the emergence of a type of Communism which makes



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powerful appeals to national sentiments and aspirations, starkly contrasted with brutal Soviet repression, many of the older anti-Communist stereotypes have crumbled. Much will be necessary before even the most liberal of Communist governments will relinquish its continuing monopoly of power to a genuinely independent opposition. And much skill and tact will be required to demonstrate the limitations of a centrally-planned economy when, for the first time in a decade and after many bitter experiences, the ordinary consumer may begin to see something that looks like adequacy, or even plenty.

The unique contribution of Western information media in the immediate future will be once again to provide a clear and meaningful *rationale* for the continuation of those dynamic changes which we witness today. Information media can point out the avenues which are realistically open, and can define the aims for future action. Such media remain the only means of contact with a mass audience inaccessible in any other way.

It is no exaggeration to say that the face of Eastern Europe has been virtually transformed since Stalin's death—transformed by the awakening of powerful forces working for freedom and finding expression in a multitude of pressures, some of which have been most dramatically applied. These forces have reached a crucial stage. Spiritual and material hungers are aroused which cannot be ignored or repressed.

Given the opportunities implicit in this situation, the West must use the instruments which it has developed and perfected over the years to embark on a course of information and education which will display not only skill and imagination, but which will give direction and support to the forces generated by a profound popular will to freedom.

SOCIALIST REALISM

Artists and Agitprop

WILLIAM BENTON

SOVIET WRITERS and "creative" artists still are hitched to Agitprop's chariot. But obviously the reins have been loosened. The process was beginning when I was in Moscow last fall. Two statements published this summer symbolize the change. Dmitri Shostakovich, Russia's leading composer, was allowed to denounce in *Pravda* the "dogmaticians" who "often present naive and ridiculous demands on composers for some kind of arithmetical balancing of the 'negative' and the 'positive' in every individual work."

Ilya Ehrenburg, famous novelist and the most adroit of Soviet verbalizers, takes an Olympian view of the change in a brief dispatch to the *New Republic:* "Like all my fellow citizens I am glad about what is happening in our country but not surprised. How can man be surprised at seeing fields turn green in the spring if he knows that he planted them in the autumn?"

We can now, seemingly, expect Soviet output in the arts to become somewhat livelier, somewhat more diverse. The lovers will perhaps be allowed to talk like lovers instead of mouthing platitudes about increasing productivity for the greater glory of the motherland. But as yet there is little reason to foresee that Soviet writers and artists will soon be free to criticize the basic Communist doctrine or the party leaders, or indeed to stray too far from the long established lines of "Socialist realism"—the aesthetic dogma of the Soviet.

Just what is "Socialist realism" as seen through the eyes of its proponents? This question interested me throughout my month's stay behind the rusting iron curtain last fall, and I came back to it again and again.

It is easy enough to determine what "Socialist realism" was in the days of Stalin. Its monuments, like his, surround the visitor to Russia.

Thus, on my first day in the USSR I walked through the exhibition rooms of the Leningrad School of the Soviet Academy of Arts. There, in room after room, I saw scores of huge paintings. There were paintings of Russian farmers resolutely putting their hands to the plow; of Red generals pointing triumphantly at their battle charts; of Lenin and Stalin in various poses, all of them decidedly heroic. As I left the school, I saw two blank canvases, each about ten by fifteen feet in size, lying on the floor at the top of a great staircase.

"What are these for?" I asked the associate director of the school.

Mr. Benton was formerly Assistant Secretary of State and United States Senator from Connecticut.

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"They are for the pictures of Marx and Engels which will be painted for the coming anniversary of the October, 1917 Revolution," he replied.

I raised my eyebrows and asked how long it would take to paint these pictures.

"Two days," he replied. "We can, of course, in an emergency do them in eight or ten hours. They are just copies of photographs."

The dean of the Academy gave me this definition of "Socialist realism" as it applies to painters and sculptors: "It is," he said, "realistic art, which is understandable to the masses of the people." But in the Leningrad school I saw no paintings of boys and girls, no scenes of families, no color designs, no evidence whatever of humor or fantasy. The paintings were propaganda designed to delight the eye of the Communist political leader who sought eulogy for himself, his dogma and his version of history and society.

IN VIEW of what is actually being exhibited and taught today in the Leningrad Academy, it is surely somewhat naive for Ilya Ehrenburg to write in the past tense about "those vast canvases depicting historical events or set genre scenes that made up our art exhibitions five years ago and that distressed us with their likeness to photographs, their lack of artistic approach to art, their academicism."

A more accurate verdict is that of Mrs. Manya Harari, describing on the BBC "Third Programme" a visit to the Museum of Russian Painting in Moscow: "A Soviet work of art must still pass the three tests of *ideynost*—'idea content,' *partiynost*—'party spirit,' —and *narodnost*—a term difficult to translate, meaning 'folk' or 'national' or 'popular' quality or democratism."

The aesthetic theory of "Socialist realism" has long pervaded, of course, not only Russian painting, but every field of Russian art—including that of the drama, which had once shown such remarkable vitality. It is vital no longer, as can be seen in the comments which Olga Bergholtz, a Soviet writer on art and literature, wrote recently: "Our Soviet theater has lost its theatrical qualities . . . Love has disappeared almost completely from our lyrical poetry, just as . . . movement has gone out of our movies. There the characters do nothing but sit and stand and talk, and above all take part in meetings."

But here, too, as in the case of painting, one can see that the new "relaxation" has relaxed the critics far more than it has most of the practicing artists and cultural commissars. Thus, when in Moscow, I lunched with Konstantin Simonov, a poet, playwright, and novelist who is one of the half-dozen leading writers of Russia. I asked Mr. Simonov if the lovers in his new play, "A Love Affair," talked about the needs for higher levels of industrial productivity. He replied, "Well, people do talk about the need for more production." This was at least a more intelligible report on the present nature and effects of "Socialist realism" than I received from the commissars. Mr. Ibos, of the Hungarian Ministry of Culture, who is responsible for fifty-six permanent theatrical companies (plus the circus!), told me that "Socialist realism" is "by Gorki from Marx and Engels out of Lenin." I mildly expostulated that I wasn't sure what that meant! The Czechoslovakian Minister of Culture, with whom I talked in Prague, traced another lineage for it. He said, "Socialist realism is in fact a continuation of the great traditions of literature, basing itself on Shakespeare, Cervantes, Tolstoy, Mark Twain, and Walt Whitman."

AFTER SIFTING what I had read, seen and heard, I was able to come to several conclusions. For writers (and artists too), I discovered, "Socialist realism" embodies at least two major elements. The first of these, by which the Soviet writer must abide, is the party dialectic. This demands a "true and historically concrete expression of reality in its revolutionary development." But what this has meant in practice, I discovered, is just one thing: Soviet literature and art must recognize only the truth of "people struggling for Socialism." Everything that favors the development of "Socialism," as it is conceived by the Communist Party, is true and must be glorified. Everything that opposes it must be slandered and combated.

The second major guideline has been the Party's demand for optimism. "Socialist realism" cannot admit possible failure in the achievement of Socialist aims. The film or the novel must focus on "the happy ending," which, of course, means only the final victory of Socialism. The sacrifices and exploits of the heroes must not be treated as ends in themselves. Socialism itself is always the hero and the end. Reverses and shortcomings can never be more than temporary. They can never be attributed to defects in the system; they are always caused by enemy machinations. In the end (Socialist) righteousness must triumph.

This bundle of self-righteous precepts has led Soviet writers to absurd, even grotesque, presentations of life. In the years following World War II many unwittingly fell into the trap of portraying their villains more realistically than their heroes. Their villains seemed human. Their heroes were artificial creatures who resembled nothing the reader could recognize.

Of course, some Soviet writers sought ways of escape. Some ceased producing altogether. Others found refuge in translating foreign works. Still others fled into the past and resurrected historical themes that seemed safe. But most writers tried their best to

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cater to the demands of the Party, sometimes with curious results. One such result: the Soviet playwright Nicolai Virta invented the "no-conflict theory" of writing, which was well in accord with Stalinist ideology. It was based on the assumption that, since Communism had eliminated basic conflicts from Soviet life and since Soviet drama is supposed to represent life as it is, drama itself should therefore be "conflictless." One thing wrong with this assumption, of course, is that because it flouts reality it produces dull plays.

Mr. Nazarov, who is a Deputy Minister of Culture for the entire U.S.S.R., is an eloquent dialectician. He said to me in Moscow: "We emphasize the theme of labor in art and literature because everything comes from labor and everything should go to labor. All Soviet literature and art pursue the most lofty aims of mankind. I do not say this as an agitator, but as a fact. As to freedom, our American critics are misled. Ask any artist or man of letters here whether he is free. His answer will be 'yes.' He can pick his theme. He can deal with it as he wishes. The issue is how one defines freedom. 'Socialist realism' is not a stereotype. On the contrary, it gives the artist the opportunity to manifest his individuality to the full." But by our standards, of course, this statement is simply not true. By our standards, the Soviet artist is no more free than a radio-commercial announcer on NBC or CBS.

EVEN MORE eloquent—and more dialectical—was Nicolai Skachko in Kiev, the Deputy Minister of Culture for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. To my question as to whether politicians set the standards for the artists, he replied, "There is no particular author for our standards. These standards are the work of the collective. The philosophical basis for them is, of course, in Marx. Lenin and Stalin were the people who worked out Marx's philosophy as it applied to the arts. To understand 'Socialist realism,' you must understand 'dialectical materialism.' Materialism has a great and long history, and 'dialectical materialism' is even more complex."

"The method of 'Socialist realism,'" he continued, "gives the artist an opportunity to project the developing world. It is the method by which the artist portrays the objective world around him, the world that exists independently of the artist's will, the world that is everybody's world. Things are constantly dying out and being born, and the artist must stress the latter, that which is being born, rather than that which is dying."

"Socialist realism," Mr. Skachko continued, "is more than just duplicating photography. It must portray an image. Thus when an artist paints a woman *kolkhoz* worker (a collective farm worker), he must catch the image. He must project the depths of her soul. In her eyes," he said, waxing enthusiastic, "I see a woman—more than a woman, I see a mother. I even see more than a mother—I see that someone loves her. And beyond all this I see that she is performing an heroic deed in her work at the *kolkhoz*. This image is realism. The rest is photography." Actually, of course, in this example the government is trying to propagandize further motherhood and higher productivity on the *kolkhoz,* and toward these ends the artist is prostituted.

I asked M. Skachko whether the Soviet artist should paint the weak side of life, and he replied that he should. But he explained that the weakness should be painted solely in order that it could be eliminated. He showed me a painting which was entitled "The Discussion of the Two." In the Soviet schools, the marks used in grading the pupils' work range from "Five" to "One," and of these the grade of "Two" means "Unsatisfactory." Skachko said, "In this painting you see young people condemning by their postures the behavior of a comrade who got a 'Two.' Here in this painting is 'Socialist realism.'" And so it is.

"Is the artist free to paint what he wants and as he sees it?" I asked Skachko. He replied: "His theme is wholly up to him. It is his personal affair, with no restrictions." But then came the big qualification, and in this qualification unhappily flows the artist's lifeblood, be he painter or writer. "The Ministry of Culture," Skachko said, "does turn to the artist to persuade him to accept certain themes."

It developed that Skachko himself was speaking at an artist's meeting the very next day. He was going to recommend as a theme to these artists the new *Kakhovka* power station. He wanted the artists to go there and to work out compositions "to show the images of the people who created the power station —so that a person looking at the picture can read the whole story of this great achievement by looking at these people." Similarly, Mr. Skachko controls the theatres and movies of the Ukraine; he sets the standards of "Socialist realism" to which scenario writers and dramatists must adhere—if they want their works produced and if they want to earn a living as scenarists or dramatists.

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One does, of course, find occasional but very small wrenches thrown in the official artistic machinery by a well-known artist. One of the most notable of these is Alexander M. Gerasimov, President of the Soviet Academy of Arts, who once said: "We respect Picasso as a fighter for peace. But he's no artist." Now he says that he deplores the pompous paintings of the "Stalin School of Art." In Moscow I was told that Gerasimov had broken with "Socialist realism" far enough to be painting a scene of nude peasant women taking a bath —a picture which has since been reproduced in *Life*. I was also told that many other artists have privately and secretively been producing "unofficial" works for their own pleasure.

The Somewhat New Look in Soviet art and letters, it seems to me, is a mark of the growing confidence of the Soviet regime, and a sign of strength rather than weakness. Nikita Khrushchev is reported to have said, commenting on the Kremlin's relaxation of its pressure against religion, "Religion is still the opiate of the people, but we are strong now and not afraid of it." Perhaps the same confidence will now permit a few new shoots and flowers to sprout from the rich soil of Russian talent and tradition in the arts.

RUSSIAN LIFE

Journey to Moscow

JAMES A. MAGNER

AFTER AN extended period of mysterious isolation, during which only accredited diplomats and selected visitors were admitted within its confines, Russia is beginning to raise the Iron Curtain and welcome what may be called "the tourist trade." Taking advantage of this opportunity, I went recently with a small group to Leningrad and Moscow. On the assumption that I am one of the first Catholic priests to visit Russia as a tourist since the end of World War II, my observations may, perhaps, be of some general interest.

All tourist services and facilities in Russia are operated by the government owned and controlled Intourist Agency, which has a limited number of American travel bureau connections. Admission to Russia is contingent upon completion of these travel arrangements, but the essential key to entrance is a Russian visa. Application for a visa is made through the Russian Embassy, but the latter must submit all requests directly to Moscow. As a result, the prospective tourist may have to "sweat it out" up to the day of departure, without knowing whether the visa will be granted or not. In the case of my group, four of us left New York without more than the hope of a visa, although application had been made two months previously. Three of us were given our visas in Helsinki, Finland; the fourth received his only after the rest of us had departed for Leningrad. Another group of thirteen was patiently awaiting word in Helsinki, and at the time of our departure only two had received visas. The whole process is clothed in mystery. No explanations are given for delays or denials.

Visas are issued for specific cities. The principal places now available to the tourist are Leningrad, Moscow, Kiev, and Odessa, but other excursions are offered. In Russia itself, moreover, special visas may be secured to visit places in the satellite countries, such as Warsaw, Vilna, and Prague.

I should make it clear at the outset that my Russian tour was not undertaken at the invitation or request of anyone. It was paid for individually, without any subsidy. With these facts established, I can state that I received prompt and efficient service throughout my stay, and experienced only the most courteous reception and treatment. While our major sight-seeing was on a conducted basis, we were asked to indicate our special interests. There was no objection to our walking out alone. My movie camera attracted considerable interest, but I was allowed to take photographs everywhere I went, without restriction or molestation.

In Leningrad, two hotels, the Astoria and the Europa, are reserved for Intourist travelers. In Moscow, we stayed at the monumental Moscow Hotel, although the National Hotel is normally designated for Intourist. I understand that two or three swank hotels are reserved in the capital for top-level, "red carpet" visitors. The Moscow Hotel rooms are provided with television as well as radio. Food everywhere was good and ample; everyone was eager to please.

I was glad to know that all expenses were paid in advance under the packaged tour arrangements and that tips are definitely not expected or accepted in

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Russia. The current rate of exchange—four rubles to the dollar—would have produced early bankruptcy on cash transactions. At the border railroad station of Viborg, after leaving Finland, I bought some cookies at the rate of forty cents each. A ham sandwich cost more than a dollar. A bar of chocolate came to four dollars. In Moscow, I saw some small painted boxes, which could be used for cigarettes or jewelry. The prices—ranging from eighty to two hundred dollars—put an end to any further interest I may have had.

THE GENERAL appearance of the Russian people, on the other hand, did not indicate distress or poverty. The city of Leningrad, which is one of the most beautiful in Europe, with a population of about four million, has been restored, and is constantly expanding in new housing developments. Moscow, with a population of six million, is truly monumental, with vast building façades and streets of six to twelve lanes. Scattered throughout the capital are several skyscrapers, including the 32-story University of Moscow, all reminiscent of the Wrigley Building in Chicago. Strangely, the wide streets are comparatively empty, with only buses, trucks, and a few automobiles in evidence. The sidewalks are jammed with people, mostly dressed in black, the men wearing caps or bare-headed, and everyone moving like a worker-ant to his or her destination.

At strategic points in the city and along the country roads, large posters, showing young workers and farmers, urged the people to greater patriotism and production. The bright colors and even the types of youth portrayed seemed more like those of an American calendar than of actual Russians. In the small villages, and even in the big cities, one still sees the traditional type of booted-and-whiskered peasant. More surprising is the prevalence of women sweeping the streets, working with pick and shovel on the railroads, doing heavy labor in the collective farms, and even digging in the construction of new buildings.

What the living standards of these people are and how satisfied they are with their working and living conditions are questions to which I can only conjecture an answer. Practically everything is owned and directed by the state. All work for the state. Laziness or failure to fulfill an assignment thus shares the character of a crime. Payment for services is made by salary or wages. There are some "ruble" millionaires. Remuneration on the collective farms is made by distribution of income, based upon work units and industry. An individual may buy from his income, not only consumable goods, but also such things as an automobile, radio, or even a house in the country. But he may not sell at a profit or rent his house to another.

All city-housing is government owned and operated, and I was informed by various persons that rental charges generally amount to not more than ten per cent of the individual's income. Despite the impressive size and facades of the housing quarters and developments, it was my impression from what I saw that the average apartments are elemental in facilities and often dingy. While stores are crowded, the goods displayed are definitely not of the luxury class; and I should judge that after food, clothing, and taxes have been taken care of, the individual has little left to put in the bank or to get capitalist notions.

On the other hand, the government has made strenuous efforts to provide public monuments as well as recreational and educational facilities and to make these available to all. It is true that much of what one sees today is the legacy of the Czarist era; but the Communist regime has not hesitated to conserve and repair these monuments for the appreciation of the public. Thus, the great art collections of the Hermitage in Leningrad and of the Kremlin, the State Tretyakov Picture Gallery and many others in Moscow are open and crowded with visitors. The fountains of the Peterhof gardens, destroyed or damaged by the retreating Germans, have been restored to their original splendor, rivaling those of Versailles. The subway stations of both Leningrad and Moscow, erected as monuments to Soviet enterprise, are, in the strict sense of the word, fabulous. The Industrial Exhibit and particularly the Agricultural Exhibit at Moscow are truly magnificent. There are over thirty permanent theatres in Moscow, including the famed Bolshoi Theatre, all well patronized. On the other hand, the motion picture theatres show only silent films; needless to say, none of these carry Hollywood productions.

IN THE FIELD of education, tremendous strides have been made. It is estimated that there are now three million teachers in the Soviet Union, with about thirty-four million persons under instruction, including adults. Education is now compulsory up to the fifth grade, but facilities for advanced education to the highest degrees are available. The University of Moscow, which I visited, has an enrollment of twenty thousand students. Needless to say, religion has no place in the curriculum. I was informed from several sources that, while many of the older generation still nourish religious beliefs, the younger generation regards all this as only a tissue of myths. The religious pictures in the art galleries are described as representing "legends." The Alexander Cathedral in Leningrad still houses an anti-religious museum, although tourists are not encouraged to visit it.

It is interesting, as a matter of fact, to note that everywhere the old historic churches are under repair, but only to be used as museums. Even in the Kremlin, the church towers carry the cross, side by side with the

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red star of the government buildings. I was told that in Leningrad fourteen Orthodox churches, one synagogue, one mosque and one Roman Catholic church are open for worship. Upon further enquiry, I was advised that the Catholic Church is closed. In Moscow, upon my request, I was shown the Catholic Church of St. Louis of France, which is surrounded by a high iron fence, well padlocked, and windows barricaded. The neighbors told me that a priest comes from time to time to conduct services; but I did not receive further information. In Moscow, I saw Dean Hewlett Johnson of Canterbury, in full street clerical attire, as well as another clergyman in gray suit and clerical collar. A special article by Dean Johnson had, shortly before, been carried in the "Moscow News" praising "the firm conviction that the Soviet people think peace, talk peace and work for peace." In the long line of pilgrims visiting the tomb of Lenin and Stalin I saw several other clergy, who were apparently of Chinese or Indonesian origin.

The "Peace to the World" motive was everywhere present, together with signs signalizing "Towards the Victory of Communism," "Long Live the Great Russian People—the Builders of Communism," and "Our Best Wishes to All People Who Struggle for Democracy and Socialism." Incidentally, I noticed that the portraits and statues of Stalin are still in place. When I enquired about the popular reaction to Khrushchev's now-famous attack on Stalin, I was told that Stalin was a great man, but that towards the end of his life he made mistakes, particularly in agricultural production, which had to be recognized and corrected.

To what extent Russia will continue to open its doors to visitors from the West is difficult to predict. One thing appears clear, namely, that the men who control the Kremlin now believe that they have reached a point of achievement which can be proudly exhibited. Large contingents of pilgrims, adults, youth groups, and children are being brought to Moscow from all parts of Russia. The agricultural and industrial achievements and goals of all regions of the Soviet empire are on display. Chinese military officers and civilians, as well as groups from India and other areas of the Far East, are everywhere, and individuals and commissions from the Western nations can be seen in considerable numbers.

As I flew over the ruins of Warsaw and drove down the grandiose Stalin Avenue in East Berlin, with gaunt wrecks and rubble all around, I could not resist the conviction that, until it bogs down from the weight of centralization and bureaucracy, Communist Russia will continue to spread the gospel of "Peace to the World" with the principles of Marx and will not yield its hold on one acre of the territory which it has brought under the hammer and sickle. The tragic events in Hungary have, unfortunately, borne out that conviction.

THE SCREEN

MAKING THEE LAUGH AND CRY

THE CHARMING movie made from Jessamyn West's *Friendly Persuasion* may not send audiences running from the theater to join the Society of Friends, but it will certainly warmly interest them in the Quakers. Anyone would enjoy the Birdwells, a farm family in the Southern Indiana of 1862, beneath whose austere apparel beat hearts as warm and loving as anyone else's. The mother (nicely played by Dorothy McGuire) is a preacher at Quaker Meeting and hence is most strict; she has no easy time of it with her husband, who enjoys a song occasionally and has a hankering for fast horses. She loves her husband, but she means it when she says to him, "If thee talked as much to the Almighty as thee dost to thy horse, thee'd have better understanding." The father, played by Gary Cooper with a remarkable restraint that slips every now and then into calculated Cooper coyness, is strong in his beliefs too, but equally determined to have his way—as in the matter of the organ he bought at the county fair. When it's delivered, his wife puts her foot down. He says, "When thee forbids, thee is barking up the wrong tree." She threatens to go to the barn if the organ is moved into the house. The organ is moved in. She goes to the barn. And that night he moves into the barn too.

In spite of their strict religion, or maybe because of their strong appreciation of values, the Birdwells are a happy family, and their children are attractively played by Phyllis Love as the daughter whose beau, a Union soldier (Mark Richman), returns to organize the Home Guard; Anthony Perkins (a newcomer whose acting and handsome appearance are bound to win him stardom) as their thoughtful elder son; and Richard Eyer as their appealing little boy at peace with everyone and every thing except the family pet, the mean-spirited goose, Samantha. In fact, William Wyler, who has directed this cast so well, gives his whole production a glow of peace and prosperity. The Indiana scenery, the Birdwells and their neighbors fairly shine in the handsome De Luxe Color photography. Dimitri Tiomkin's musical score (including the pleasant "Thee I Love" sung by Pat Boone) is in keeping with the sentimental and friendly atmosphere. It's true that the Quakers don't always see eye-to-eye with their neighbors (sitting solemnly and severely in meeting while the nearby Methodists' hymns interrupt their silence or when Nurseryman Gary and son Anthony call to make a sale at the farm of Widow Hudspeth). The widow (played by Marjorie Main with her usual enthusiasm) and her three daughters introduce a raucous note to the usually quiet proceedings of the Bird-

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wells. But then again, perhaps this strident episode is another reminder to the audience that the world goes on around the comparative calm of the peace-loving Birdwells.

At mid-point "Friendly Persuasion" suddenly changes. The Civil War hits Southern Indiana. The Rebs, mainly Morgan's Raiders, are getting close. The Birdwell's Negro hired hand (effectively played by Joel Fluellen) asks for a gun to join the Home Guard, and Anthony knows he, too, must fight. The Birdwells are torn between their beliefs about bearing arms and their love for home, kin and neighbors. Director Wyler evades no issues in displaying the agonies through which the parents go in watching their son march off to war or in portraying the gory battle itself as it involves both the son and the father. "Friendly Persuasion," that had been almost cute at times, now realistically covers life and death. I don't know how Quakers will respond to the film, but other audiences will be moved by this chapter of Americana.

TWO OTHER recent movies examine today's youth —not too successfully, but in circumstances unusual enough to demand some attention. "Between Heaven and Hell" shows what happens to a snobbish young Southerner (Robert Wagner) who lands in the South Pacific in World War II and learns through a series of grueling experiences about the goodness of people and the meaning of friends. But unfortunately worse than the horrors of war, according to the film, is the captain under whom our hero is made to serve as punishment. Broderick Crawford makes this officer even more neurotic than Queeg—a fact which makes us doubt that the Army kept such sadistic men around just to reprimand boys who stepped out of line. It is, in fact, unfortunate that in its plot "Between Heaven and Hell" never really comes down to earth.

SET MORE in the present, "The Girl He Left Behind" also shows how a boy grows up after he's drafted. Based on Marion Hargrove's book, most of this film is a comedy, and a very funny one too, about the modern methods used in training draftees in a peace-time army. Director David Butler was especially successful in making his cast behave like real people: Tab Hunter as the smart college boy who thinks he knows more than the Army, Natalie Wood as his girl, who hopes the Army will knock some sense and maturity into him, Jessie Royce Landis as his over-indulgent mother, Jim Backus and Murray Hamilton as sergeants, David Janssen as a captain who has had Psych. I, and many more as draftees, officers, doctors, Congressmen, etc., etc. The film, which seems to be going in the right direction in showing how Tab finally not only cuts the silver cord but also learns to respect his fellow-men, suddenly falls on its face. His girl, who insists that he grow up and that sex comes after marriage, suddenly changes her mind and gives herself to Tab in a scene that cancels all the film's arguments about maturity and responsibilities by seeming to equate soldierly maturity with licentiousness.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

NINE PLAYS

IN HASTE, and a tangle of personal pressure, herewith succinctly the season's plenty thus far. I will begin fuller comment with next week's issue.

"The Apple Cart": Mr. Maurice Evans stating, with null and monotonous grace, the Shavian case for constitutional monarchy, and failing to disguise either the play's fatigued crankiness or his own absence of moral involvement.

"Major Barbara": Passion and religious temperament elided wholly from Mr. Charles Laughton's rigid, sententious, tricksy production of the great contemporary document.

"The Sea Gull": Mr. David Ross comes sharply to grief in the last turn of the Chekhov cycle.

"Separate Tables": Lives of gray and quiet desperation, mildly, faithfully examined by Mr. Terence Rattigan. Handsome ensemble work around the luster and dazzling authority of Miss Margaret Leighton and Mr. Eric Portman.

"The Sleeping Prince": Mr. Rattigan again, here with an occasional fable richly upholstered in velvet and gold braid. Mr. Michael Redgrave adrift in a romantic world he never made, and Miss Cathleen Nesbitt glitteringly fatuous as a relic of the old order.

"Auntie Mame": Live! Live! Live! with Miss Rosalind Russell as the celebrated lady of inexhaustible vitality. Miss Russell all leggy glamour, urban dash and wardrobe; the play jerry-built and paltry, as unalterably common as it is undeniably amusing.

"Richard II": The Old Vic, starless, in a production of superb dramatic thickness and power: lucid and ceremonial, dark and splendid in tone. Mr. John Neville magisterially dominates the imagination as the disintegrating Richard.

"Romeo and Juliet": A murky, tedious Verona, and the murky, tedious history told again. An incoherent production.

"Macbeth": Smeared with blood and venom, cleanly spoken, absorbing in its headlong rush, though without the finality of tragic vision.

RICHARD HAYES.

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A WORD FROM THE SPONSOR

WE DON'T go to the polls to vote for a bloodless abstraction labeled Conservative, Liberal or Middle-of-the-Road. We vote for a man. And a candidate's voice, bearing, manner and personal charm all have something to do with it. A few elections back, some wit said that one of the candidates looked like the little man on a wedding cake. That candidate lost the election. Dwight Eisenhower's politics were unknown before 1952, but in 1948 professional politicians in both parties were anxious to get him. They knew his engaging grin alone would account for a large number of votes.

We pick a President the way we pick a wife. Certain virtues are required, but the virtues alone are not enough. They could be listed in a classified ad. We have to know the person who practices them. Courtships are not only desirable; we think they are necessary. So are campaigns.

Television has revolutionized campaigning. It familiarizes millions with the personality of the man seeking their favor so that by the end of a campaign a candidate is as well known as a next-door neighbor.

All this is good. But the time may yet come when we will all be wishing that the magic tube had never been perfected. For the advertising agencies are taking over the campaigns and unless something is done the political broadcasts are going to rival the most offensive TV commercials.

During the election season, political leaders should be appealing to the finest instincts and aspirations of the people. But much of the recent campaign on television fell back on the same shoddy "showmanship" and meretricious "sincerity" that mark Madison Avenue's year-round efforts to sell detergents and dental creams. It was disturbing to see so many political figures behaving like the ladies who open and close refrigerator doors. The same bogus domesticity, the same phoney folksiness, the same contrived informality.

Note, for instance, that the first name has become practically *de rigueur*. It was Ike and Mamie, Adlai and the Boys, Dick and Pat, Estes and Nancy all the way through. The night before the election we were all taken to the White House for the President's final words. And what do you know, Ike and Mamie and Pat and Dick were spending the evening together. They were all overjoyed that we (along with the cameramen) dropped by. The President and the Vice President spoke to us on some urgent matters, and the President thanked us for letting him come into our living rooms. The two ladies had nothing to do but look pretty. Mrs. Nixon, who is certainly pretty enough, looked most uncomfortable.

When we dropped in at the Kefauvers, the family was gathered in the living room. Estes introduced his children and used up some expensive television time establishing that the children had a kitten (which he mistakenly called by the name of one of his daughters). The oldest Kefauver girl was improbably busy at her homework, despite the occasion and the distractions that must have been caused by the cameramen moving about. Estes explained that he and Nancy had spent part of that very evening helping her with her algebra.

I suppose the Stevensons were really models of restraint. Adlai III was new-born the evening we called on them and we were not taken to the hospital for a visit. But the emphasis at the Stevensons was also on quiet domesticity. Adlai introduced his sons one by one and thanked them politely for giving him so much of their evening. The youngest of the Stevenson sons looked frankly pained. Boys his age feel miserably uncomfortable in contrived situations. Maybe I was reading things not there, but when the closeup came his eyes seemed to be saying, "What gook!" What gook indeed.

If this sort of thing were confined to the last night of the campaign, it would be bearable. But the whole campaign was marked with the seal of Madison Avenue. There was the President's citizens press conference—well-rehearsed Eisenhower supporters stood up one by one to ask leading questions, all very carefully chosen and carefully coached, all representative of large voting blocs, all caricaturing an honorable institution. The President played along and treated the whole thing as solemnly as if it were an honest inquiry.

Remember the televised visit between Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver at the Libertyville farm. They were in their shirt sleeves, regular fellows, talking about farm prices. The "Yes, Adlai," "No, Estes" stuff sounded as tinny as a deodorant commercial.

In 1952 the Eisenhower campaign was "merchandised" by the largest of the Madison Avenue agencies. It was something new. Heavy on slogan, long on contrivance, it shocked a lot of people. This time both Parties tried the "soft sell," and public disapproval fell off to a whisper. But what had begun in 1952, four years later looked like standard operating procedure. The Democrats in the meantime had also succumbed.

Well, here is one citizen who would like to reverse the trend. I don't like all this first-name stuff. I don't like campaign speeches delivered in a conversational tone from a corn field. I am not even sure I like kittens. I do like Pat Nixon and John Fell Stevenson—they both seemed so bad at the Betty Furness game.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Novelist of the Normal

THOMAS F. CURLEY

Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told
This heart within me burns.

IT IS WORTH noticing that Thomas Wolfe's favorite poem was *The Ancient Mariner,* just as his favorite novel was *Tristram Shandy.* Like the Mariner, Wolfe had strange powers of speech, although at times his plight seems to have been worse than Coleridge's creature: seldom, if ever, did Wolfe's heart cease to burn. It seems, as one reads his letters* that time and time again Wolfe would return from a voyage or a journey, tired, exhausted, nervous, only to throw himself at his work and write 80,000 words in a few weeks. If he ever experienced prolonged dry periods, he does not confess to them. Only once, when he is in Europe after the publication of *Look Homeward Angel,* does he threaten never to write again. All of this confirms the usual judgment of Wolfe as a writer of tremendous, but undisciplined, energy. It was of Benjamin Franklin that William Carlos Williams wrote, ". . . he represents a voluptuousness of omnivorous energy brought to a dead stop by the rock of New World inopportunity. His energy never attained to a penetrant gist." We might argue long as to whether Wolfe's energy ever attained to a penetrant gist but I doubt that anyone will say that he ever stopped trying.

A reading of Wolfe's critics will show that, as a writer, he is difficult to come at, and one hope aroused by these letters was that they would help in an appreciation of his novels and stories. They help very little if at all, except to prove that Wolfe, a notorious autobiographer, is significant for his art rather than his life. As a young man Wolfe thought that there was nothing greater or nobler than to be a poet, an artist. Excited by the acceptance of his first book, Wolfe wrote to a friend in Asheville: "But isn't it glorious that this should have happened to me when I was still young and rapturous enough to be thrilled by it? It may never come again but I've had the magic—what Euripides calls 'the apple tree, the singing and the gold.'" He became, as he foresaw, disillusioned. But the poverties of fame never lessened his dedication. Every so often he thought of marrying and having a family but he never did. And towards the end of his life the conviction grew in Wolfe that "love was not enough."

So far as literary influences go, the letters confirm what was already known. He was a prodigious reader whose strongest youthful attachment was to the English Romantics. The influence of Joyce's *Ulysses* is in the letters and in *Look Homeward Angel,* but that was neither deep nor lasting. In a letter to Maxwell Perkins, Wolfe wrote that the greatest flaw in *Ulysses* ". . . so far from being a fault of caprice, was rather the fault of an almost Jesuitical logic which is essentially too dry and lifeless in its mechanics for a work of the imagination." Later on, as we know from *You Can't Go Home Again,* the book of Ecclesiastes seemed to him the greatest and wisest book in all the world. Its influence was not only literary but personal; it served to define Wolfe's break with Maxwell Perkins and Scribners'. Wolfe recognized in Perkins and in the Preacher that "hopeful fatalism" which he could admire but never accept. As we read the last letter—to Maxwell Perkins—we may be satisfied that, just as we thought all along, Wolfe's craft was not equal to his genius.

BUT WOLFE has been neglected long enough to serve as a teacher. He was at least as acute a critic of himself as any one else, and his practice is there to be studied. Consider the brief letter that Scott Fitzgerald wrote to Wolfe in which Fitzgerald urged him to cultivate an alter ego and to become a more conscious artist. Fitzgerald went on to praise the novel of selected incidents as practiced by Flaubert. Wolfe's reply is not illuminating except to the extent that he does not try to justify his faults. It is clear that what Fitzgerald wanted Wolfe to do was to correct his faults by becoming a different artist from the one he was. But this is still a merely personal consideration. For the novelist of today, in America, Wolfe may well be a better guide than Flaubert or Henry James. Like James, Wolfe tried to write for the stage and, like him, he failed. But Wolfe, having failed early, did not go on to make the mistake of writing novels that tried to create the immediacy of the stage. From his practice we may infer that he recognized the novel as primarily

*THE LETTERS OF THOMAS WOLFE. Edited by Elizabeth Nowell, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $10.

Mr. Curley is a novelist and critic who contributes frequently to this magazine.

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a narrative, rather than a dramatic, form. "Don't tell it, show it." How often we have heard this. As a result, the most favorable thing you can say about a novel today is that it would make a good play or movie. Thus, we have now a confusion of forms for which supposedly better craftsmen than Wolfe are responsible. And one need not say that Wolfe was a better craftsman than his peers to say that he had a surer instinct for the craft. That he had is due to his extraordinary fidelity to his inspiration or, better, his intuition. Jacques Maritain wrote:

"Hence the perplexities of the poet's condition. If he hears the passwords and the secrets that are stammering in things, if he perceives realities, correspondences, ciphered writing that are at the core of actual existence, if he captures those more things which are in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy, he does not do so by knowing all this in the ordinary sense of the word to know, but by receiving all this into the obscure recesses of his passion. All that he discerns and divines in things, he discerns and divines not as something *other* than himself, according to the law of speculative knowledge, but, on the contrary, as inseparable from himself and from his emotion, and in truth as identified with himself."

IT IS impossible to describe precisely the quality of Wolfe's intuition, but one salient feature, one that has received insufficient notice, is its normality. There are any number of things that have obscured this quality. First of all Wolfe's size, his appetites and his temper. He impressed those who knew him as a natural force, someone "larger than life." Then, too, in his writings and in his thoughts there is a naivete that, because of its violence, appears to be immature. He is seldom quiet, never at ease, always searching or spouting until at last many have concluded that he was little more than an overgrown boy. And there are the usual available facts to justify such a judgment. Breast fed until he was three, kept in curls for years, he slept in his mother's bed until he was twelve, and became a pretty, pampered, precocious boy, the baby of the family. In *Life* magazine, Mr. Robert Coughlan quotes his deathbed nurse as reporting that Wolfe's last words, uttered from a coma, were; "Mama, I have been a bad boy. All my life I have been a bad boy." I suppose that Wolfe never attained maturity in the usual sense of that word. No doubt Miss Nowell, in her introduction to this volume, speaks to the point when she remarks that Wolfe ". . . retained many adolescent traits until comparatively late in life."

That may be, but it is significant that Miss Nowell makes this remark while commenting on that famous passage from *The Story of a Novel*. The deepest search in life, it seemed to Wolfe, was man's search to find a father ". . . the image of strength and wisdom external to his need and superior to his hunger." Now to argue that such a belief, such a quest is evidence of adolescence is common enough, but by no means either self-evident or indisputable. Akin to the above passage is the statement in one of Wolfe's letters to his mother. "There is only one thing that a brave and honest man —a gentleman—should be afraid of. And that is death." Commenting on a similar concern with death in Tolstoy, who is seldom described as immature, Philip Rahv remarks: "Nothing could be more mistaken than the idea that Tolstoy's concern with death is an abnormal trait. On the contrary, if anything it is a supernormal trait, for the intensity of his concern with death is proportionate to the intensity of his concern with life."

It is clear from all but the last paragraphs of *You Can't Go Home Again* that Wolfe came to think of man's search for a father as ultimately a vain search. But if his thinking changed, his feeling didn't. Vain or not, the need was deep and continuing. It was, therefore, subject to the imagination. Similarly on the social plane. Wolfe was not a young man—he was thirty-six—when he wrote to Maxwell Perkins: "I discovered very early that people who had the money could do pretty damn near anything they wanted to. Whoredom, drunkenness, debauchery of every sort was the privilege of the rich, the crime of the poor." But, he continues ". . . that life can be made better, that life will be made better, is the heart and core of my own faith and my own conviction, the end toward which I believe I must henceforth direct every energy of my life and talent." Wolfe knew that all this was elementary but he also knew that this knowledge was part of him and that to ignore it, however trite, however vulgar, was, in the realm of poetry, to sin against the light. Wolfe, therefore, was condemned to imagine and fashion the ordinary and the elemental. Such a task is an American venture, but the difficulties are enormous. The artist of the normal may not indulge in eccentrics or exploit bizarre situations in order to be interesting and, especially if he is a novelist, he cannot permit his imagination to create mere dramatic contrasts, for he is more interested in people insofar as they are alike and not in their differences. This is easy enough for the theorist; he may subsume, and annihilate, his subjects according to a conceptualized system. But Wolfe was not a theorist and it was his job to do justice to his characters, in all their individuality, without rendering them queer or "interesting."

THE FATHER, W. O. Gant, of *Look Homeward Angel* is an occasion drunkard, a bombastic fellow, something of a hypocrite, but he is also the father

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who builds a roaring fire on cold mornings and wakes his children with that rough affection in which they recognize love. So too, the mother, Eliza Gant, obsessed by property and profit, is partly to blame for the early death of one of her sons, Ben. Wolfe never excuses her; neither does he scorn her grief when Ben dies. The grief is genuine. Not once does Wolfe fall into that radical resentment which mars the work of equally passionate but less balanced writers. This balance, this normality, is more difficult to maintain when Wolfe leaves the family, his own and every other, for the world of New York society. In the chapters on the party at the Jack's in *You Can't Go Home Again,* Wolfe shows us George Webber as he tries to control his antipathy to the assembled guests. A more knowing writer than Wolfe would never have attempted a serious rendering of such a gathering. He would either have burlesqued the affair, thus exploiting the sophisticated eccentrics, or he would have permitted his young writer to indulge in an indignation more in keeping with the stereotype of the gifted, but naive, bumpkin.

Wolfe's performance is less striking but truer, and not merely to life but to Wolfe's own knowledge. "The whole tissue of these princely lives, he felt, these lesbic and pederastic loves, these adulterous intrigues, sustained in mid-air now, floating on the face of night like a starred veil, had none the less been spun from man's common dust of sweated clay, unwound out of the entrails of man's agony." There is a relationship, compounded of malice and error, weakness and brutality, between the Bowery and Park Avenue. Wolfe knew this; and when he took his midnight walks, crossing Brooklyn Bridge to descend the stairs of a subway entrance to talk to the men huddled on the stairs he was not talking or walking merely from despair of sleep; he was learning his America, discovering his metaphors, prowling the night for the debris of our normal day.

"Shakespearean fish swam the sea far away
from land;
Romantic fish swam in nets coming to the
hand;
What are all those fish that lie gasping on
the strand?"

Wolfe was not a skilled swimmer but somehow or other he escaped the nets and when he died he was thrashing towards deep water.

BOOKS

The Intellectual Excitement of a Journey into Time

THE LOST STEPS. By Alejo Carpentier. Knopf. $3.75.

By WILLIAM PFAFF

THE REJECTION of modern urban civilization, the return to the primitive—this is a hackneyed and dangerous subject for a novelist. And Mr. Carpentier, who writes of a journey from New York City to a South American forest, does not completely escape the dangers of the subject. It is not that he is cheap or superficial in what he says about the character of life in a contemporary city or about the values of a primitive society. His comments are mature and his conclusion is an honorable one. But theme and conclusion are conventional and provide little in the way of evaluation of either society that is novel. What matters in this book is the journey. It is an extraordinary trip, provoking a kind of intellectual excitement I have found in only a handful of novels. If Mr. Carpentier says very little about modern life and values that has not been said before, and as well, he does say things about the physical world, about travel and time, about the growth of culture, that are breathtaking.

Mr. Carpentier is a newspaper columnist in Venezuela, a musicologist, and a former teacher, radio executive and student of architecture. He has published three novels in Spanish, and this, his second, is a triumph, a rare and fine book, full of extraordinary insight, written with a kind of intellectual validity, versatility and maturity that are very rare in the books that make up a year of American publishing.

The hero of *The Lost Steps* is a New York musician (born in Latin America) who writes motion picture scores. He is offered a commission to travel into the uplands of a South American country to collect some primitive musical instruments for a museum. Distressed and, in a measure, emptied by the intellectual and professional life of New York, he still hesitates to undertake such a trip. But circumstances make him accept—reluctantly, and with ideas of faking part of the journey and having the instruments counterfeited. He takes his mistress with him. She is an intellectual and an astrologer, her occupation and preoccupations as symbolic as much else in this book. (Mr. Carpentier, as one can see, takes a dark view of the quality of New York intellectual society.)

So the trip begins, first to a Latin city where a revolution breaks out, then to the river that is the route to the interior. And the journey, which is described with personal knowledge (Mr. Capentier has made a similar trip up the Orinoco in Venezuela), becomes quite strikingly far more than a physical adventure. It is a journey into time.

In the Latin city (Havana?) the travelers have met the Romantic Age. They have gone back a hundred years. Then, as they approach the forest, they go still further into the past as civilization recedes. They stop at an oil camp, at a river village, at an Indian settlement (and by this time the mis-

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tress has quit, unable to live without the cushion of civilization; the hero finds the classic peasant woman, feminine and intuitive, with no nonsense about astrology or St.-Germain-des-Prés). Finally the party reaches the heart of the forest. They have passed through Romanticism, through the Middle Ages of peasantry and festivals, to the Land of the Horse, the age of the Spanish conquest, to the Land of the Dog, finally to the land that was before history began—where there are found "the plants that have fled from man since the beginning. . . the rebel plants, those which refused to serve him as food, which crossed rivers, scaled mountains, leaped the deserts for thousands and thousands of years to hide here . . . . the diabolical vegetation that surrounded the Garden of Eden before the Fall."

The character of Mr. Carpentier's description of this trip is something which can barely be suggested by the kind of summary I have given. Perhaps the extraordinary richness of this book can be conveyed by what the author says about what he calls the Land of the Dog:

> There was no place for the horse in a pathless world. . . The Dog, on the other hand, whose eyes are at the height of a man's knees, sees everything lurking under the treacherous fronds, in the hollow of the fallen leaves; the Dog, with tense muzzle, twitching nose, registering danger in rising hackles, has observed over the ages the terms of his first alliance with Man. For it was a pact that joined Dog and Man here, a mutual complementing of powers which made their relation a brotherhood.
>
> The Dog brought to the bargain those senses which had atrophied in his hunting companion—the eyes of his nose, his moving four feet, his useful disguise of an animal among other animals—in exchange for the spirit of enterprise, the arms, the oar, the walking upright that the other contributed. The Dog was the only being that shared with man the benefits of fire, assuming by this approach to Prometheus, the right to take Man's side in any war against Animals. For this reason, that city was the city of the Bark. . . . On nights when the moon was full the dogs gave themselves over to its adoration with a vast chorus of howls which was no longer interpreted as presaging some calamity, but whose sleep-banishing effects were accepted with that resigned tolerance with which one accepts the tiresome rites of relatives who practice a different religion. . . .

I said earlier that this book is of a kind infrequently seen in our own writing. It is an intellectual novel, and a highly disciplined one. It is not primarily *story* (as is, say, *The Cypresses Believe in God,* a Spanish novel of comparable stature); it resembles the work of Malraux or Koestler in being adventure which has its primary meaning at the moral and intellectual levels. And unlike most American novelists, Mr.

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Carpentier has the kind of control that enables him to write of matters that veer very close to sentimentality without becoming sentimental or evasive. There is a vigorous and important element of cynicism in what the narrator has to say about his own weakness and perverseness. He writes, too, with justness; while he has contempt for falseness, he is not arrogant.

But most remarkable is the time theme. Mr. Carpentier's knowledge of music and of history and anthropology, at the service of a first-rate artistic talent and a highly original mind, make the book a brilliant and enviable accomplishment.

A word too must be said of Miss Harriet de Onis' translation of the Spanish original into a fine English style. She contributes immeasurably to this book, as she has in other distinguished translations.

Between Distinction and Popularity

THE CITY OF THE LIVING. By Wallace Stegner. Houghton Mifflin. $3.

By JOSEPH M. DUFFY, JR.

THE AUTHOR of this volume of short stories has a respectable status among American writers of fiction. Now close to fifty, he has behind him a considerable body of work which has been respectfully regarded by critics. For some time, in addition to the practice of fiction, Stegner has been teaching "creative writing" at Stanford.

Stegner belongs to that group of academic poets and novelists members of which are to be found in colleges throughout this country. These are not the occasional poets or fiction writers who between their courses in the Renaissance Lyric or in Transcendentalism, or between their articles on "Mythopoeia in Melville" or "Class Conflict in Jane Austen" turn out, now and then, a poem or a short story. Nor are they the visiting writers who have no official duties beyond a public reading or two and some conferences, whose appointment is for writing, and who are expected most of all simply to reflect the glory of their being over their host college's autumnal shade. Rather, these academic men of letters are those whose primary interest and renown are in their practice of imaginative writing but who, like Stegner, are active teachers, usually of courses in the craft of fiction or poetry.

It is not the intention of this review to advance a theory that the college or university campus, the academy—tree-shaded, book-lined, and youth-filled—is not the artist's proper home, one where he may best fulfill himself. To be convincing such a theory would presume an exact knowledge of many persons, places, and works. Moreover it would presume that there *is* a proper home for an artist—a debatable notion. Still, although a theory not be urged, may not the question be asked: is the academy suitable as permanent residence for the artist? If in the world there is the danger of distraction, in the academy is there not the danger of abstraction? Are there not possibilities of corrupting refinement for the artist when he inhabits the ivy tower which, like that other retreat for aesthetes, is too remote from the world's activity, from its blare and swell and toughness?

Stegner, it was noted above, has a respectable position as a novelist. A distortion of this statement would be equally accurate. As a writer of fiction Stegner exists in a creditable limbo between the esteem and distinction achieved by a few novelists—Faulkner, for example, Hemingway, and Warren—and the popularity of the professionals—consult the best-seller lists for their names. And he stays dependably between these two worlds, never rising to the level of the one nor sinking to the level of the other.

The City of the Living is a good example of Stegner's capability. The eight stories represented here have artistic integrity; they are varied, proficient, and interesting. They range in length from ten to eighty pages; they move in setting from

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Luxor to Salt Lake City; in technique they display Stegner's competence in managing different points of view, in handling physical detail effectively, and in employing unforced symbolic devices. Through all eight stories one thematic concern predominates: a concern with what Stegner in one story calls "the most chronic and incurable of ills, identity." Character after character is nagged by the lonely burden of his own identity and calls for recognition from another over a space planetarily vast and desolate—to the other side of a room. In the majority of the stories the conflict is provided by the alienation of parents from children—the pain of the desire for communication frustrated by the inability of one to act or the other to receive.

Several of the stories are very good, notably the title story, "Impasse," and "The Traveler." Two are weak, one of which is the longest story in the volume, "Field Guide to the Western Birds." Nearly all of them, however, are poignant in insight, skillful in construction, and impeccable in manner. Despite this praise their merit is limited and a single reading will catch most of it. In the best of them, even, one misses a significant thickening of import and notes a complacency of form. These stories are too unruffled, too imperturbably "right." They are admirably contrived academic pieces. And in them one looks in vain—perhaps precisely because they are academic—for the very quality of life itself captured and enriched by the artist, that moral reverberation sounding from all the world's discordant brass upward to the sure, silent harmony of art.

Mock Hero as Mock Villain

FACE OF A HERO. By Pierre Boulle. Translated by Xan Fielding. Vanguard. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

MANY NOVELS exploit as they explore the human complexus. An obtaining stratagem is to edge the puzzle of the *persona* about with a drowning-man-with-straw suspense. Clearly, there isn't much suspense when it is only a straw man drowning. In the pulsing *Bridges Over the River Kwai,* Pierre Boulle was adroit with the gimmicks demanded by the aforesaid technique; but these are such as hold snares for the writer as well as reader. The plot of *Face of a Hero* is given an uncertain fillip and a no uncertain bullying by the author's remorseless *voluptate psychologica.*

Jean Berthier is an intrepid lawyer. Descended from a long line of Northern legal worthies, this newly appointed public prosecutor of a Provençal town regards the volatile Southerners with condescension, as a goad to his perfectionist self-esteem. Fate, incurably banal that way, chooses to dispatch him the acid test of character at a rare unguarded moment: lying in the country beside his sleeping fiancée, he witnesses through a film of blissful drowsiness the accidental drowning of a young woman; he slowly tumbles to the reality of what he has seen only to be stunned to inaction; by the time he decides there was nothing he could have done, it is too late to do anything.

Although he is momentarily beleaguered by the question of his own "guilt," more importunate is his anxiety about what would happen should the townspeople be given an opportunity to judge him (hell hath no fury like the righteousness of the good-natured). What torments him above all is the reaction that would come from his adoring but predictable fiancée. But it isn't enough that no one should find out: Berthier's *amour propre* will not rest until it has converted this chastening experience into its supreme triumph. As a private crusade, this undertaking becomes a ritual of quixotic self-deception, and a sanctimonious hoax as a public performance.

Suspicion grows that the girl was murdered by the young Vauban,

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son of the richest and most unloved man in the community; the entire locality considers that its officials have proven their moral bankruptcy as pawns of this powerful intrigant, and all eyes are on the new public prosecutor, to see if he is to be tarred with the same brush. This blind, not to say cynical, lust for justice proves too tempting for the flamboyant Berthier; no doubt a slight imposition of amnesia will be needed before he can serve the interests of justice with complete disinterest. Yet serve them he does, to the certain sacrifice of his career.

Meanwhile, the plot is incurring as many perforations as Berthier's memory. An instance is the fact that although he would prove that the suspect had premeditated the "crime," not once is he or anyone else, including the defense, inspired to wonder how Vauban could have overlooked the only major clue, the girl's bicycle. Various other discrepancies crop up which the defense lawyer could use to spike the evidence against the accused, yet, though he is reputed to be one of the best in the country, he urges his client to plead extenuating circumstances.

The suspense is tantalizing for awhile, but dims out as soon as it begins to batten on repetitive elaborations of the mock hero-mock villain role of the principal. The irony is heavy and strained, and nuance is thin, which accounts for the portrayal being crudely subtlized.

On the last page Berthier stands triumphantly before his exalted courtroom audience as the embodiment of abstract virtue which has managed to trick justice; alongside his whim of iron the supine venality of his antagonists is as the milk of human kindness. Altogether, this problem-hero saddles his author with a curious hero problem. M. Boulle shows himself astute about the character, but not objectively, not with acute imagination; he is constantly anticipating him *sub voce*. However, he goes far with a neat descriptive prose; and it must be said that in his delineation everything comes off on schedule—including Berthier's head.

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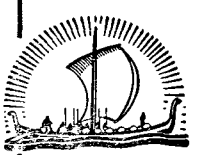

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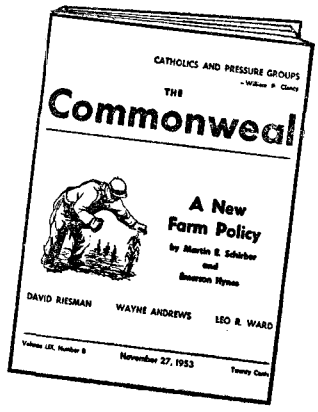

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